

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**PSYCHOSOCIAL INFLUENCE
ON ENTREPRENEURIAL
RESILIENCE AMONG PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES IN
MALAYSIA: MEDIATING ROLE OF
ENTREPRENEURIAL
COMPETENCIES**

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of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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ABSTRACT

Persons with disabilities (PwDs) in Malaysia continue to experience limited participation in formal employment due to persistent structural barriers related to education, workplace accessibility, financing, and entrepreneurial support systems, prompting entrepreneurship to emerge as an alternative pathway for economic participation and self-sufficiency. However, sustaining entrepreneurial ventures under such constrained conditions remains challenging, highlighting the importance of entrepreneurial resilience. Motivated by this practical concern, the present study investigates how psychosocial factors comprising psychological elements (locus of control, self-efficacy, and personal perception) and social dimensions (education, social networks, and family and friends) influence entrepreneurial resilience, and whether entrepreneurial competencies (innovativeness, risk-taking, proactiveness, and opportunity recognition) mediate this relationship. A quantitative, cross-sectional research design was employed involving 379 respondents with physical disabilities residing in urban areas of Malaysia, selected through purposive sampling via the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia (JKM) database. Data were analysed using SPSS Version 29 for descriptive statistics and SmartPLS Version 4 for structural equation modelling. The findings indicate that psychosocial factors exert a strong and positive influence on entrepreneurial resilience, while entrepreneurial competencies significantly mediate this relationship, strengthening overall resilience outcomes. These results demonstrate that psychological and social resources form essential foundations for resilient entrepreneurship and must be translated into competencies to achieve sustainable outcomes. Consistent with the United Nations Flagship Report on Disability and Development (2024), structural exclusion remains a critical barrier to full economic participation among PwDs. As a practical contribution, this study introduced the DBizNest mobile application, showcased at IIDEX 2023, which operationalises the findings by integrating psychosocial enablers with competency development within a digital ecosystem tailored for PwDs. Building on these insights, the study proposes the Resilience Competency Mediation Model (RCMM) as an extension of Duchek's resilience frameworks, conceptualising how psychosocial factors are transformed into resilient entrepreneurial outcomes through entrepreneurial competencies within Malaysia's inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Key Words: Entrepreneurial Resilience, Psychosocial Factors, Entrepreneurial Competencies, Persons with Disabilities.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces a study on entrepreneurial resilience among persons with disabilities (PwDs). In Malaysian policy frameworks, the term is officially recognised by the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development (KPWKM) as ‘Orang Kurang Upaya’ (OKU). Internationally, these individuals are referred to as Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) by organisations such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). The chapter presents the research background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, and the significance of the study. In this context, the focus is placed on the ways in which psychosocial factors, which include both psychological and social influences, interact with entrepreneurial competencies to shape resilience among PwDs. The chapter also outlines the scope of the research and defines key terms used throughout the thesis. The structure of the chapter follows a logical sequence, beginning with the background of the study, identifying the central problem, and leading toward the formulation of the research framework.

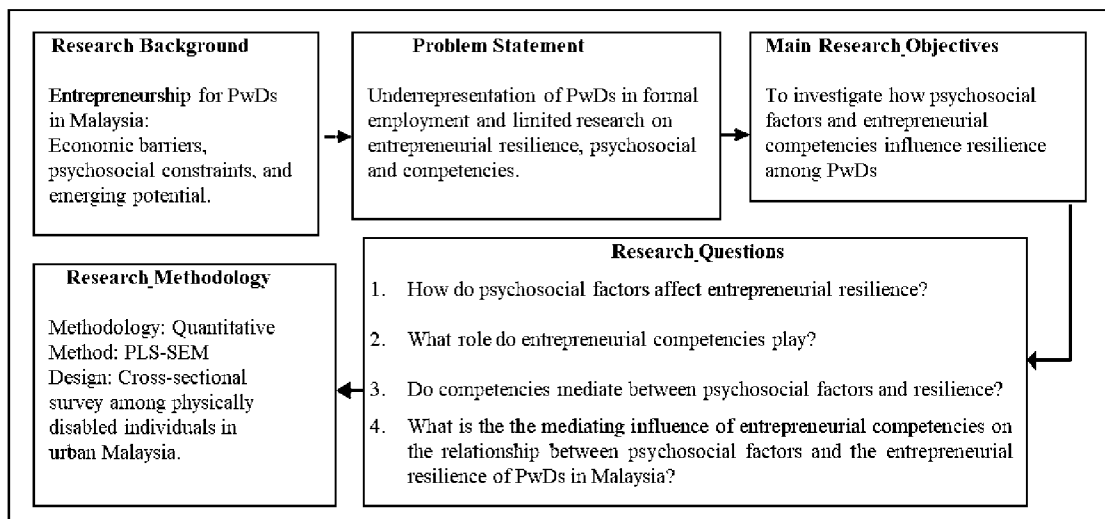


Figure 1.1 Overview of Key Sections in Chapter 1



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